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1754—1904

One Hundred and Fiftieth
Anniversary

OF THE INCORPORATION
OF THE

TOWN OF PETERSHAM

MASSACHUSETTS



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST THE TENTH

1904

F74
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Gift
F. E. Gibbs
Town Clerk
June 1 '12

COMMITTEE

*EDWIN C. DEXTER, *Chairman*

CLARENCE S. FISKE, *Secretary*

GEORGE AYRES

FRANCIS H. LEE

JAMES W. BROOKS

WILLIAM SIMES

FREDERICK BRYANT

BENJAMIN W. SPOONER

CHARLES S. COOLIDGE

WILLIAM W. STEWART

CHARLES A. FOBES

CHARLES S. WALDO

ALLEN FRENCH

CHARLES K. WILDER

MERRICK E. HILDRETH

ROBERT W. WILLSON

BENJAMIN W. SPOONER, *Marshal*

*Mr. Dexter, to whose judgment, energy, and tact the successful arrangements for the celebration were largely due, is the present owner of the farm on which the rebel Shay is said to have been overtaken by General Lincoln (see page 34). The old house has disappeared, but an old-fashioned sweep overhangs the well which was under the L of the house. The farm was for many years, and until his death, owned and occupied by the late Deacon Cephas Willard, referred to on page 39.

PROGRAM

MORNING

The procession, planned for the morning, had to be dispensed with on account of the weather.

AT TEN O'CLOCK

MUSIC. The Salem Cadet Band.

PRAYER. Rev. Alfred W. Birks.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS. Mr. William Simes, *Chairman of the Meeting.*

ADDRESS. Mr. James W. Brooks, *President of the Day.*

POEM. Mr. Francis Z. Stone.

SINGING. "America." By the Public-School Children and Audience.

BENEDICTION. Rev. Preston R. Crowell.

AFTERNOON

AT TWO O'CLOCK

MUSIC. The Salem Cadet Band.

ADDRESSES BY

His Excellency, JOHN L. BATES, Governor of Massachusetts.

Hon. FREDERICK H. GILLET, M. C., of Springfield.

Hon. JAMES J. MYERS, of Cambridge.

Hon. STEPHEN SALISBURY, of Worcester.

Mr. J. HARDING ALLEN, of Barre.

Rev. ALVIN F. BAILEY, of Barre.

Mr. HENRY S. BENNETT, of New York.

Mr. ABIATHAR BLANCHARD, of South Norwalk, Conn.

Rev. FRANCIS E. TOWER, D.D., of Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

Mr. GEORGE W. HERR, of Athol.

AND OTHERS.

SINGING. "Old Hundred."

NOTE

THE township of Petersham was granted, under the name of Nichewaug, in 1733, and incorporated, under its present name, in 1754. It celebrated the centennial anniversary of its incorporation on July 4, 1854, and the sesquicentennial on August 10, 1904. Its people made generous preparation for this occasion, in which they were very deeply interested. A large tent, for accommodation of the many who were present, was spread over the lawn in the rear of the Memorial Library. The celebrated Salem Cadet Band discoursed delightful music. Ample arrangement was made for refreshment of the inner man and beast, and attractive fireworks were provided to prolong the celebration into the evening.

Among the guests in attendance were the distinguished gentlemen whose names appear upon the order of exercises, and whose interesting and eloquent addresses — referring to the exceptional beauty of Petersham, to its happy relationship to its neighboring towns, to the prominence of its early settlers and the noteworthy part they played in the early history of the Commonwealth; to the State, her illustrious men, her institutions, industries, and schools, her world-wide fame in every department of human activity, and her high rank in the great sisterhood of the Republic; and to America's foremost place among the nations of the world — were heard with rapt attention and received the intelligent and grateful appreciation of a crowded and enthusiastic audience.

The following letter from the late Senator Hoar had led the committee to hope for the honor of his presence:

WORCESTER, June 14, 1904.

Dear Mr. Brooks:

I should like very much to visit Petersham at the time of your celebration. But I have been directed by my doctors to make no engagements which will involve any speaking in public for more than five minutes for some months to come. And I cannot now tell where I shall be on the tenth of August. Perhaps you will permit me to reserve my reply, therefore, until the time approaches.

I have very pleasant recollections of Petersham. I had many strong friends and clients there, including the town itself.

I am, with high regard, faithfully yours,

GEO. F. HOAR.

Unhappily, as the day of celebration approached, it became evident that the illustrious man's last word in public had already been spoken.

The day was unfortunate. A pouring rain—well calculated to revive the waning faith in the Noachian deluge—sadly interfered with the day's proceedings and deprived the people of much of the pleasure the town had hoped to afford them. They proved, however, to have inherited the pluck and hardihood of their ancestors and bore their misfortunes—and even the morning address—with the heroism that characterized the earlier New England “days that tried men's souls.”

J. W. B.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY MR. SIMES:

Citizens, Friends, and Lovers of Petersham:—

WHEN our fathers came into the wilderness, almost before they sowed the seed for the harvest they built with devoted hands their church. The first church of Petersham, the Town Church, stood at the south end of the Common, on the east side. In those days every one went to church, and soon the little building became too small and a new and larger one was built about where the flagstaff now stands. In the belfry of this church was placed a bell cast by Paul Revere. They continued to go to church, and in 1842, about the time of the town's greatest prosperity, the present church was built on the west side of the Common and Paul Revere's bell found a new resting-place. For over one hundred years it has sounded through the clear air of our hills its call to worship, its summons to the grave, its notes of joy, its notes of sorrow. It has called us here to-day, and its note has been a joyful one. I will ask the Rev. Alfred Birks, the pastor of the First Church, to invoke the divine blessing.

AFTER THE PRAYER, MR. SIMES CONTINUED AS FOLLOWS:

The story is told that in a Chinese city a native was asked where he lived. He replied, naming a small village many miles away. His questioner said, "But you do not live there now." "No," replied the Chinaman, "but the old root is in that village." Nineteen centuries before, his family had moved away, but in their hearts, for those nineteen centuries, had the root been kept alive. We know to-day what the Chinaman felt; for deep down in the heart, among its sacred things, lies the love for our birthplace, the love for the home of our

fathers. Distance does not weaken it; it grows stronger as we grow older.

We are met to-day to celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Petersham. In 1733 or 1734 the first settlers came into this then unbroken forest. In 1754 the infant settlement petitioned the General Court to be incorporated and was christened Petersham.

To you whose roots go down to the earlier days of Petersham, whose ancestors lie under the quaint stones of its silent graveyards, to you who here first saw the light of day, the occasion is of the deepest interest.

But if in a less degree, yet still in full measure, is it a joyful one to those who, like myself, have come from without its borders to find its soil an easy one to take root in.

To you, our neighbors, who are bound to us by so many ties of kindred, by so many associations both of war and peace, who have always rejoiced when we have rejoiced, we bid a hearty welcome.

Especially do we welcome the distinguished guests who have honored us with their presence. To-day we claim you all as citizens of Petersham.

In these times when we spell the United States with very large letters, may it not be that the story of our old Massachusetts town teaches more than a local lesson? For the story of Petersham is the story of Massachusetts; the story of Massachusetts is the story of the influences that have made our nation great, and by which it must ever be guided if it is to remain great. It is the story of the industry, courage, and fortitude that conquered the wilderness; of the love of education that placed the schoolhouse by the side of the church; of the love of liberty that gave to Massachusetts Samuel Adams and Samuel Hoar and Charles Sumner, and to Petersham Jonathan Grout, Col. Ephraim Doolittle, Capt. Park Holland, Capt. Wing Spooner, Capt. Ivory Holland, Capt. Asa Howe, Capt. John Wheeler, and Capt. John Mudge, and the glorious list of soldiers of the wars of the Revolution and Rebellion inscribed upon the tablets of its Memorial Building.

It has never been questioned who shall tell our story. But one name has been thought of. He is the nephew of him who fifty years ago, told the story, and whose saintly face and charming presence are among our pleasantest memories. He was born of ancestors whose names are written upon every page of our town's history. He left Petersham in early manhood, but his roots held tenaciously to his native soil, and he returned to it to give freely of his time, his taste, and his means to make it a place worth living in, and to do a loving work in preserving and revealing the beauties of its woods and streams.

I have the pleasure of introducing to you the President of the day, Mr. James Willson Brooks, who will deliver the address.

ADDRESS BY MR. BROOKS:

IT is not definitely known how our township came by its name. In England, near London, is an interesting little parish called Petersham—the ham, or home, of St. Peter. So far as we know, ours is the only other ham, or home, of that name on the planet.

Whether St. Peter really officiated, visibly or invisibly, at the birth or baptism of these places, or how far residence in either may improve one's chances at the gate of which he is said to hold the key, is not yet revealed to us. The thing certain is that, by some decree, celestial or terrestrial, our Petersham is here, has been for one hundred and fifty years, and is our theme to-day.

In the little time afforded us, we can note these many years only as one sees the country from the window of a railway train or regards the landscape from a hilltop. There can be no stopping at stations—hardly time to count the mile-stones along our way. Persons and things nearest and most interesting must be swept by or overlooked, and our attention mainly bestowed upon the more prominent objects and outlines in the dimmer and more distant view.

What can be offered in response to the manifold interest that has brought you here to-day? What can be said to our friends from the neighboring towns, whose kindly regard for us always brings congratulation for our happy days and sympathy for our days of trial? What to the long absent who return to find the old home painfully crowded with those no longer here? What to those drawn hither by desire to see the former abode of some honored ancestor? What to you who come wondering what the little old town can have left to say for itself? And to you, veterans of the Civil War, comrades of our departed Captain Mudge, whose names, with those of our heroes of the Revolution, are on the tablets in Memorial Hall, and who, with many more of us, must too soon join

“The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of Death”?

What grateful word of appreciation have we for our worthy chief magistrate, who, engrossed with the weightier interests of the larger towns of the Commonwealth, has not disdained a generous consideration for one of these little ones? What shall we say to you, our summer friends, who come with the laurel, the caddy, and the bobolink to make our longest days too short and few, and, with the first frost, put your houses in curl-papers and migrate with the other birds of passage? And what to you, our good people here throughout the year, except what, in to-day's celebration, you are saying to yourselves and bidding me say to all,—although it goes without saying,—Here are our homes, our fields of labor, and our loved ones, and the homes of those who here have lived, labored, loved, and gone before us? Here many of us had our first waking and are to lie down in our last sleep. Here rest our sainted dead. Here are our old meeting-houses, rich in hallowed association with friends and days that will return no more. Here are our playgrounds, alert with the life and ringing with the mirth of expanding youth, as the generations succeed one another and write their chapters in

the story of the town; and here are our everlasting, ever-changing, never-changing hills—dumb witnesses of events that have stirred and must ever stir to patriotic thought and deed—mute emblems of sublimity unutterable—silent monitors of the all-embracing might and mystery that ever invite and forever baffle all finite comprehension.

Our records are few and dim and the tooth of Time is gnawing the once potent names from the stones where,

“Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.”

We love the old town. We honor the men and the deeds that have wrought our inheritance, and we could not suffer the rounded period of one hundred and fifty years to steal into the shadows of the past without meeting with one another and asking our friends to join us in celebration of our fair fame and in the pious resolve that our bequests to the future shall not be altogether unworthy of our inheritance from the past.

It is said that our intelligent and devoted friend, the dog, finds in the long way around the short way home. Let me imitate that faithful fellow creature so far as to approach our subject of Petersham by way of Maine and New Hampshire.

In the town of Wakefield, in the latter State, near Lake Winnepiseogee, is a small sheet of water known as Lovewell's Pond; and in Fryeburg, Maine—once a part of Massachusetts—the little town in which the great Daniel Webster once taught school and copied papers in the local registry of deeds, is another pond bearing the same name. In both cases the name was bestowed in honor of Captain John Lovewell, of Dunstable. From the border of the former, in February, 1725, he brought away the scalps of ten Indians. On the border of the other, three months later, he laid down his life.

Captain Lovewell, a sturdy and fearless man, was a famous fighter in our wars with the Indians, whose depredations, in the early part of the eighteenth century, had become so cruel and disastrous that our general court offered a bounty of

£100 for every Indian-man's scalp brought in. Captain Lovewell, whether inspired by this bounty or by more patriotic motives or by both, gathered a band of resolute men to share with him the dangers and profits of Indian-hunting. In December, 1724, they captured a scalp and a living Indian near Lake Winnepiseogee, and received their reward. In February following they made another excursion to the same region. On the easterly side of the lake, on the twentieth of that month, they found a trail, and, just before sunset, descried smoke which indicated an Indian encampment.

Careful to avoid discovery, using no fire for cooking their supper lest the smoke might betray them, muzzling their dogs to prevent barking, the next day, cautiously watching, they waited in silence for the dead of night. Then, stealthily creeping near and perceiving ten Indians asleep around their camp-fire, they fired upon them, instantly killing seven. Two of the remainder fell as they started from sleep, and the third and last, badly wounded and trying to escape, was seized by a dog and instantly killed.

These Indians had with them shoes, moccasins, blankets, and other equipments provided for the use of captives they expected to take from some settlement of white men and drive or drag with them over the ice and snow to Canada.

Thus, after a short absence, Lovewell and his band returned to Boston with ten scalps, and received, in addition to their daily pay of two shillings and sixpence, a thousand pounds of prize money.

This exploit, on the border of the little sheet of water in Wakefield, gave to it the name of Lovewell's Pond.

Having settled the affairs of this expedition, Lovewell immediately recruited a company for another campaign, and, on April 15, 1725, wrote as follows to the governor:

Sir,— This is to inform you that I marched from Dunstable with between 40 and 50 men on the day above mentioned, and I should have marched sooner if the weather had not prevented me. No more at present, but I remain your humble servant. JOHN LOVELL.

He wrote no more then — and, so far as we know, no more ever.

Of this expedition we learn from a sermon preached by Thomas Symmes, at Bradford, not long after, that Lovewell, starting with forty-six men, travelled a little way when one, falling lame, had to return. Later another, disabled, had to be dismissed with a kinsman to accompany him. Again, another falling ill, the captain halted, built a fort, and left his doctor, a sergeant, and several others to care for the sick man. With his company thus reduced to thirty-four men, he then travelled on forty miles to Pequawket, now Fryeburg, Maine. On Saturday, May 8, 1725, while at prayers very early in the morning, they heard a gun and saw an Indian. Perceiving that the enemy desired to draw them on, they debated whether to fight or retreat, when the men in general said, "We came out to meet the enemy, we have all along prayed God we might meet 'em, and we had rather trust our lives to Providence than return without seeing them and be called cowards for our pains."

Lovewell led them on, to find they were ambushed and greatly outnumbered, but they fought desperately from morning to night. About the middle of the afternoon Jonathan Frye, for whom Fryeburg was named, a young man of liberal education, chaplain of the company, who had fought with undaunted courage, was mortally wounded, and, when unable longer to fight, was heard praying for his comrades. After sunset the enemy withdrew, Lovewell and many of his men dead, and nearly all the others wounded. In the night the scattered men got together. One, unable to proceed, said, "Load my gun and leave it with me, for the Indians will come in the morning for my scalp, and I'll kill one more if I can."

Another, having fallen from loss of blood, crawled up to one of the ensigns in the heat of battle and said, "I'm a dead man, but, if possible, I'll get out of the way and save my scalp."

Another, left behind, said to a departing comrade, "I shall

rise no more. Go to my father and tell him I expect in a few hours to be in eternity and am not afraid to die."

Once, during the fight, the Indians asked if the whites would take quarter. "Only at the muzzles of the guns" was the answer. The preacher, in closing, says, "I have only to add that, whoever considers the distance our people were at from any white settlement, in the howling wilderness and very far in the country of the enemy, who were at home and more than double our number, how they fought from morning till night without any refreshment, and the number killed and wounded, will doubtless grant that this action merits room in the history of our new English wars whenever a continuance of it shall be published."

This forlorn fight with the Pequawket Indians, in which, though a drawn battle, their chief was slain and they were driven to Canada, gave once more the name of Lovewell to a little pond on the border of which it occurred. On the shore of this pond, in Fryeburg, Maine, on the 17th of June of this the year of our one hundred and fiftieth anniversary, the Society of Colonial Wars unveiled a rough field-stone bearing a bronze tablet to the memory of Captain Lovewell and the men who there died with him.

Why these details? Partly because of our general interest in the exploits of the daring men who had to clear our primeval forests of savages before they could clear them for peaceful settlement, partly because it is pleasant to note that societies and individuals are increasingly interested in preserving the records and honoring the memories of those who have bravely wrought in any field for the welfare of their fellow men, and partly because these narratives take us back to and reanimate the men and times to which they relate, show us their environment, and tell us the story of those fearless, fighting, scalping, praying, preaching ancestors of ours, and teach us something of their character, spirit, faith, and courage, and of what they had to dare, do, and endure to prepare the way for us, their more fortunate descendants. But the principal reason is that, six years after this fight with

the Pequawket Indians, John Bennett, Jeremiah Perley, and some threescore more, from Dunstable, Lancaster, Groton, Concord, Worcester, and other places, who had fought under Captain Lovewell and were with him when the ten scalps were taken by the pond in New Hampshire, and who, in earlier campaigns in search of Indians, had scouted with him over these hills of ours and thus discovered their beauty and fertility and conceived a desire to make their homes among them, in the spring of 1731, the year before George Washington was born, petitioned the governor, Council, and the Great and General Court of His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay for the grant of this township, which they asked for and, two years later, obtained in consideration of hardships endured, dangers incurred, and services rendered under the leadership of Captain John Lovewell, of Dunstable, and Captain John White, of Lancaster, in their warfare with the Indians.

These, then, were the men to whom we trace our local beginning. *Si monumentum queris, circumspice!* If you seek the monument unveiled to them here, look about you. You will not find their names on the tablets of our Memorial Hall among those of the later patriots who have rendered us signal service, but you can well afford them a grateful place on the tablets of your memories.

Look back for a moment to this first period of our history. No town in this vicinity was then in existence. There was no Petersham, Athol, Phillipston, Barre, Dana, or New Salem; no Worcester County, no State of Massachusetts, and no United States of America. There was no settlement nearer than Rutland, Brookfield, Deerfield, and Lancaster, and these were aflame and bleeding in their deadly conflict with the Indians. There was no road over our hills and no bridge across our streams. No mill here had ever ground a bushel of corn or sawed a log or helped to full a yard of homespun. No wheel had ever left a track upon our soil, and no stone had found a place in the many miles of moss-grown boundary-walls that mark the toil and ownership of our living and dead.

There was here no hearthstone, no horse, ox, cow, sheep, nor domestic fowl. The whole region was still an unbroken wilderness, the abode of rattlesnakes, wolves, bears, wildcats, and wilder men. But the hour had struck for a change of scene. The descendants and followers of the Pilgrims, aflame with the love of civil and religious liberty—for themselves, if not for the Indians—and resolute with the energies, convictions, and courage which had brought them over seas or through the struggles and trials that equip for high achievement, were rapidly increasing in number and crowding back from the seacoast, up the navigable waters of the rivers and across the intervening hills and valleys, in that restless, onward movement which has overspread the continent and has not been stayed by the waters of the Pacific ocean.

The time had come for wild animals and wild men to disappear, for the streams to turn the wheels of the pioneer, for the forests to fall before his axe and be cleft into his abode, his meeting-house, his schoolhouse, and his storehouse; for his clearings to become seed-places for his harvests, pasture-grounds for his flocks and herds, and dwelling-places for himself and his descendants.

These lands were still a part of the kingdom of England. Our governor was a British governor and our people were British subjects; but Washington was in his cradle and Liberty was in hers, and great questions were stirring great men to great deeds and great chapters in human history.

Work—serious, unselfish, dangerous, and bloody work—was preparing for this hill, for Bunker Hill, for Bennington and Saratoga and many an elsewhere for this brave and sturdy pioneer who must back his faith and courage with his bayonet and flintlock.

Consider his first steps here. The township granted, John Bennet is authorized to convene the proprietors. Duly warned, they first meet at the inn of Thomas Carter, in Lancaster, on May 10, 1733, choose their first moderator and clerk, vote a survey of the township and the laying out of a portion of it into lots of fifty acres each to be drawn for by

the proprietors, pass the orders and rules, and appoint the committees required for settlement of the plantation according to the terms and conditions of the grant, which were, in general, in all these towns, that a certain number of proprietors should be settled within a specified time, that a meeting-house should be built, a lot set apart for the first settled minister, a gospel minister installed, and due provision made for schools—religion and education planting themselves under the very foundation-stones of early New England.

The march to the township begins. There are no roads and no vehicles. The settler packs upon his own back or the back of his horse his scanty clothing, provisions, and utensils, shoulders his axe and gun, and, scouting around Wachusett, clambering over the Hubbardston hills, fording Burnt-shirt River, and crossing Moccasin Brook and the little beginnings of Swift River, comes to his allotted acres on these hills of ours—his food, wild game; his drink, the waters of the streams; his shelter, a blanket and the boughs of trees; his home, a howling wilderness; his neighbors, wild beasts and savages; and not yet the friction-match with which to light the dead-wood of his first fires. Then follows the log hut, the little clearing and the little mill, men working in groups for safety, their guns near at hand in readiness for wild beasts and savage men.

A few of the hardiest brave the severity of the first winter, the rest returning to their families. The next spring brings these back, and others with them. Seed is sown, vegetables are planted, the hearthstone is laid, the meeting-house begun, roads are made, and woman's hand begins to busy itself with bread-stuffs, the needle, the spinning-wheel and loom, and in all the manifold ministrations which make and maintain her foremost place in the hearts and homes of men.

For a time meetings continue to be held in Lancaster and Groton. At length they are appointed for the meeting-house here. The first one in June, 1735, and, as the principal approach to the place is from Lancaster, it is voted that Captain Jonas Houghton have five pounds out of the treasury for ma-

king the road from Lancaster, along the north side of Wachusett, to where it meets the path on the south side of the mountain, near Burntshirt River, so passable as to carry comfortably with four oxen four barrels of cider in a cart at once.

It would be interesting to know why such comfortable carriage of so much cider was made the test of utility, and we may wonder what cider-carrying capacity the governor now requires as the standard of efficiency for the State roads the Commonwealth is building for everybody except ourselves, but we must not stop to ask him.

The plantation, because granted, as we have seen, to volunteers under Lovewell and White, was, in the beginning, sometimes called Volunteer's town; but, until its incorporation, in 1754, under its present name, it was generally known as Nichewaug, the Indian name of the hill on which stand the houses of Mr. Gay and Mr. Carter. The first allotments of land included those along the crest of the hill, in the general direction of our main street. To these, from time to time, were added others until the whole grant was taken up.

The first meeting-house, fifty feet long by forty wide with twenty-one feet stud, was built by the old churchyard, on the east side of the Common, near the site of the brick school-house. The minister's lot was the land on which is the dwelling-house of the late Sanford B. Cook. The first inn was located a little northerly of the Nichewaug. The first school-house in the centre of the town — afterwards removed, and converted into the present dwelling of Mr. Job Lippitt — stood near the site of the present one. The first mills were probably by the pond on the Barre road, in the pretty valley known in my boyhood as "Slab City."

Preaching began in the spring of 1736. The first article in the warrants for the proprietors' annual meetings related to the salary of the minister, who was hired, paid, criticised, discussed, approved, condemned, called, and dismissed under legislation of the proprietors' meeting — parent of the town meeting, the American unit of popular government until the evolution of the machine and the party boss.

In the absence of fences, cattle and swine were, for many years, allowed to run at large, the swine, in the language of the records, being yoked and ringed according to law.

The leading men, farmers, lawyers, doctors, merchants and others, became field drivers, hog reeves, deer reeves, and other officers of the town for its secular uses, and, for the seventh day, besides the minister, the deacons, and the man appointed, after the gift of a bell, to ring it an hour before meeting and to ring and toll it at the time of meeting and at the time of funerals and to sweep the meeting-house and provide water for baptism, the town elected tithing-men, who are described as a "kind of Sunday constable, whose special duty it was, in the old parish meeting, to quiet the restlessness of youth and disturb the slumber of age."

The meeting-house, which was also the town house, was slowly developed rather than built, and was for years the constant subject of town action and appropriation. There was no provision for warming it, and, in winter, the proprietors' meetings were generally adjourned to the inn. On Sundays, when the temperature threatened a Christian serenity of mind, the women carried with them little foot-stoves filled with live coals, which contributed somewhat to the comfort of the pew, as did the old-fashioned warming-pan to that of the bed in the unwarmed room.

A story of the warming-pan is told of a home in which the so-called head of the house used to retire before his better half, who had a habit of warming her portion of the bed after the lesser fraction had taken possession of his. He so often protested, insisting that sooner or later she was sure to burn him, that, one night, she pushed the pan vigorously against him and sent him howling from the bed to find the cruel creature had filled the thing with snow.

But, like many another in these degenerate days, we are wandering from the meeting-house, which, in March, 1739, had advanced to a stage at which it was voted that the "Deacons do buy a descent cushion for the pulpit," and, in 1742, it was voted "to lath and plaster." The deacons apparently

did not buy the "cushing;" for in 1748 it was again voted to buy a "plush cushioning," and that Samuel Willard provide it.

The meeting-house had at first but one pew, that of the minister, and a deacon's seat in front of the pulpit. Later a row of pews was built around the house along the walls, at the expense of their owners. The intervening space was divided into two rows of seats fronting the pulpit. These were assigned to the inhabitants generally—the better ones to the owners of the larger estates, "with some regard," the records say, "to age." The women were placed on one side of the house and the men on the other. Committees were chosen from time to time, to "seat the meeting-house," which was a very delicate operation, often involving jealousies and embarrassments.

In a neighboring town, it is said, some young men built for themselves a pew behind the women's seats, which the town refused to allow to remain there. The reason is not given. Did it perchance divide the devotions of some young maiden, and make her

". . . blush scarlet right in prayer
When her new meetin' bunnet
Felt somehow through its crown a pair
O' blue eyes sot upon it"?

Occasionally merriment was provoked by the seating of the meeting-house. One man in a neighboring town, to whom had been assigned pew number 6, which was the last one toward the outer door, on the following Sunday, marched up the aisle counting aloud, in the reverse order, up to 6, which brought him to the pew in front, in which he calmly seated himself, as much to the amazement of those claiming the chief seats in the synagogue as to the amusement of all the others.

The meeting-house was at length completed and often filled to overflowing with worshippers who came, at first, with the musket, as did the minister, who, while having before him his sermon, with a sometimes sulphurous charge for his flock,

kept by his side his gun, with another charge for the savage that might suddenly require more pungent preaching.

At length the old building—which was at one time offered to the General Court as an inducement for making a shire town of Petersham—gave place to a larger house, designed, tradition says, by Bulfinch, the architect of the State House front ~~and of the Old South Meeting House in Boston~~. In the tower of this second house, a bell, cast by Paul Revere and presented by Eleazer Bradshaw, was in due time hung, and there voiced the motto cast upon it:

“The living to the church I call,
And to the grave I summon all.”

The bell, once cracked and recast, hung there until this second house, in its turn, was superseded by the present building of the First Congregational Parish, in the belfry of which it was placed and still remains, its mission somewhat affected by the changes of time; for the old knell that added to the suffering of the afflicted as they bore their dead to the grave is no longer sounded, and, though to the church the living still are called, a diminishing few go in.

The schoolhouse was a thing of slower growth, for while the mother, sitting at her open door, could see wild beasts moving about with their young, and knew that, at any moment, the Indians might be prowling near, she was slow to suffer her children to go unprotected from her side. But the schoolhouse, in due time, came.

The township was divided into what, at first, were termed “school squadrons,” corresponding to our districts, which, in their turn, are passing away since the adoption of the present custom of conveying scholars from their homes to the schools in the centres of the towns.

Educated teachers were early here. The one most in evidence was Ensign Mann, long known as Master Mann, a Harvard graduate, the ancestor of Mr. George S. Mann, a lifelong friend of Petersham, who knows a good deal about it and ought to write its history.

Ensign Mann first came here as a candidate about 1767, a dozen years after the incorporation of the town, when conditions were ripening for the outbreak of the Revolution. He was so warm an advocate and so zealous a worker in the cause of liberty as to arouse the opposition of the more conservative people, among whom was the first "Gospel Minister," the reverend Aaron Whitney, who refused to participate in Mann's examination and withheld his approval; but the young candidate prevailed, entered upon his labors, became a leader of the patriots, and by his ardor aroused the increasing disapproval of the royalists, to whose arguments for his conversion he remained indifferent until he encountered the eyes of Miss Alice, the minister's daughter. Under their fire he is said to have surrendered unconditionally, and to have passed, and loyally remained, under the yoke of his new allegiance.

Streams and their adjoining lands were granted to persons who engaged to build saw and grist mills and to keep them in repair ten years and to sell good pitch pine boards for forty shillings per thousand or saw to the halves during said period.

Ask the pulp and match companies where now are the pitch pine boards and the picturesque old up-and-down saw-mills—the pulp companies that supply the great newspapers, a single issue of only one of which consumes the spruce of acres; the match companies that send by the millions our sapling pines, riddled into splinters, to light the pipes of Europe and, for aught we know, the camp-fires of Russia and Japan. The teeth of their screaming blades are everywhere tearing through the hearts of our trees and leaving, in their trail, sawdust and scattered branches to feed the forest fires that leave in ashes, desecration, and desolation the sighing groves, God's first temples, in which the thrush has sung his praise.

Some of us remember the old mills and how, as boys, we sat upon the logs and were hitched and jerked backward and forward to the movement and the music of the dancing saw,

and how, in the old grist-mills, while waiting for our grists, we popped corn on the old box stoves in full sympathy with the impatient lad who, eager to get away, said to the miller:

"I could eat that meal faster than your old mill grinds it!"

"How long?" asked the miller.

"Till I starved to death," said the lad.

In the early days there was constant laying out of roads, that led to store and mill and meeting, to neighboring farms and towns, to the county seat, and to adjoining States; and it appears that the economical fashion of "working out taxes" by leaning on the hoe-handle and swapping stories was early introduced, for we find it voted that "the surveyors shall judge whether the men that work at the roads do a day's work in a day."

Rewards were offered for the tails of rattlesnakes and the heads of crows and wolves, and for the discovery of the villain or villains who broke the glass in the warrant and publishing boxes.

During vacancies in the pulpit sums were appropriated to meet the expense of "riding after ministers," the need of whom was emphasized by the organization of a company of forty men, each to have a good horse, for the detection and punishment of thieves. The poor were sold, "by Vandue, to those who would keep them cheapest." Committees were chosen to get rid of the paupers coming from other towns, and to manufacture pearlash, sulphur, and saltpetre, and "in order to prepare kittles to make salt."

Provision was made for the purchase of firearms and for accumulation of flints, powder, and lead.

Some of us remember an old powder-house that stood, during our childhood, easterly of my farm barn, in the pasture which then belonged to my father. I have a vivid recollection of the building, for it contained a large chest filled with munitions of war, from which, without orders from headquarters, I one day took some cartridges and emptied them of powder, to which I applied a match to see if it would burn. The experiment was successful. The powder responded with

customary promptness, burned to a crisp my woolen tippet, scorched my eyebrows and eyelashes, singed what hair it found below my cap, and left upon my cheeks two tell-tale blisters that soon after drew from me a reluctant explanation, under the cross—the very cross—examination of my father.

Although the period from the grant of the township, in 1733, until years after its incorporation, in 1754, was filled with matters of local and personal interest, it is marked by few events of such importance as to justify extended comment here.

Noticeable facts, distinguishing the early from the present time, were the almost authoritative influence of the ministers and the length of their pastorates. Denominational differences had not begun to organize and proclaim those diversities of view which defeat assent to any one belief and tend to discredit all, and individual disagreements had not yet destroyed the outward unity of church relationship. Town and parish were one. Meeting-house and town house were one. All subjects of common interest were there considered and generally acted upon without seriously affecting the dignity of the pastor or the sanctity of the pastoral office.

The settlement of the "Gospel Minister" implied a sort of marriage for the better or worse of a lifelong union, which often followed, and bore the fruitage of powerful and benign influence that held shepherd and flock in the bonds of a deep and abiding reverence and affection.

The first four pastorates in the town covered a period of nearly a hundred years, as was the case in many towns, a single pastorate not infrequently continuing for more than fifty years.

The first settled minister, Aaron Whitney, was installed in 1738, and occupied his pulpit until his loyalty to his king and his outspoken belief that the grievances suffered under the royal government were less than those to be anticipated from rebellion became so offensive to the majority of his people that the town voted not "to hire, bargain with, nor employ

the Rev. Mr. Whitney to preach" for them, and this vote was accented by appointment of a committee of ten "to see that the publick worship on Lord's Day next and all future worship be not disturbed by any person going into the desk but such as shall be put there by the town's committee."

When the reverend gentleman next attempted to enter the pulpit, tradition says he found the committee's instructions embodied in the form of a half-breed Indian behind a pitchfork and in front of the meeting-house door. This pointed argument proved so persuasive that the venerable pastor withdrew and confined his after-preaching to his own house and to such sympathizing friends as cared to hear him there. But a few years after his death, when political bitterness had subsided, the town erected a monument at his grave "in token of their regard for him."

Mr. Whitney left a large family. One of his sons, Rev. Peter Whitney, wrote a history of Worcester County. Three of his descendants were, Professor Whitney, the eminent philologist of Yale University, Professor Whitney, the equally distinguished geologist of Harvard University, and a brother of these, who was recently the librarian of the Boston Public Library.

Solomon Reed, Mr. Whitney's immediate successor, a notable man in many ways, remained in his pulpit until his growing tendency to confound spiritual and spirituous distinctions led to the appointment of a committee to visit him and urge diminished indulgence. This committee, it is said, encountered such urbanity and overflowing hospitality on the part of the reverend gentleman and his accomplished wife, who was famous for her flip, that all its members withdrew from their courtly presence having obtained what they termed Christian satisfaction, but with reputations for sobriety and efficiency as remonstrants greatly impaired. Let it not be forgotten, however, that this was before the evils of intemperance were publicly proclaimed, at a period when slavery still existed in Petersham, when rum and sugar were among things provided for the ordination of ministers, and when

common hospitality demanded the offer and acceptance of beverages of an ardent variety. His pastoral relation was finally ended at his own request.

He also left a large family who became valuable members of society. One of his daughters married Dr. Joseph Flint, a distinguished physician at one time in practice here, as the immediate successor of an eminent kinsman, Dr. John Flint, grandfather of the Misses Flint who recently owned the house now belonging to Mrs. Emerton, of Salem. Dr. Joseph Flint was the son of Dr. Austin Flint, of Leicester, and father of the celebrated Dr. Austin Flint of New York, a native of Petersham, who became president of the American Medical Society and died, not long since, on the eve of a visit to England to deliver an address as the official representative of his profession in the United States. The latter was the great-grandfather of Cuvier Grover Flint, a gentleman four years of age, known to some of you as a somewhat prominent resident of this town for the past few months.

It is needless to refer to the later ministers or the friction of their pastorates. The church records show the forefathers and mothers to have been very like the after fathers and mothers, and no less susceptible to the influence of weather and the various forms of indisposition that affect the modern zeal for church attendance, in spite of creeds, covenants, canons and catechisms, and of committees appointed to act upon the offence of non-attendance and neglect of ordinances.

One Lydia Blank, under examination by a committee, said her husband opposed her attendance. This he denied. Then she said the pastor had made a bet, lost it, and refused to pay, and that she could not, in conscience, thereafter hear him preach. As it appeared that she had neglected to attend before the alleged wager and when other ministers were in the pulpit, the defence was deemed inadequate.

Betsy Blank gave as her reason for neglect of duty that the church had made her unhappy by its attempt to punish her husband. This, too, was deemed insufficient. One man claimed his freedom because he had changed his views and

considered his religion a matter solely between himself and his God. A revolutionary soldier objected to his pastor's interest in politics, and he was charged with becoming so belligerent whenever visited by the committee as to induce the belief that he was without that wisdom which is gentle and easy to be entreated, and the committee declined further watch and ward over him.

Not many of the original proprietors ever permanently settled here. The names of Gates and Wilder are the only ones still borne by inhabitants of the town. But from the beginning Petersham attracted able and cultivated men, and the place had a rapid growth which gave it early prominence among the towns of Worcester County.

Its agriculture was profitable and its trade remunerative. Its leading farmers, merchants, business men, ministers, lawyers, doctors, and teachers were persons of intelligence, character, reputation, and influence that extended beyond the limits of the town.

At the end of the eighteenth century the town had a population of 1,800, more than double its present population, and its early prosperity was fairly maintained until the middle of the century following, when the great manufacturing centres, the growing cities, the developing lines of railroad and sea-borne transportation, the opening up to settlement of the fertile prairies of the West, the new discoveries of the precious metals, and the many other appeals to youthful intelligence, energy, and enterprise drew the young men from the hills and, throughout rural New England, slowly prepared the way for the deserted hearthstone and the abandoned farm, where now, too often, are seen only the open or brush-covered cellar, the bucketless well, the clump of lilacs, and, perhaps, the hectic flush of a clinging rose, to mark the places where the forefathers fought the savage and the soil; where

“Ag” in the chimbley crooknecks hung
An’ in amongst ’em rusted
The ole Queen’s arm that gran’ther Young
Fetched back from Concord, busted,”—

and whence have issued their descendants to become the soldiers, statesmen, engineers, lawyers, preachers, poets, artists, writers, and leaders who, throughout the land, have builded, in their manifold manhood, the noblest monuments of our modern antiquity of Old New England.

Fiske, in his "Critical Period of American History," speaking of the men trained in town-meeting and believing it all-important that people should manage their own affairs, says that the principle was carried so far in Massachusetts that the towns were like little semi-republics and the State a league of such republics. The truth of this finds notable illustration in the records of this town.

At a meeting held here Dec. 30, 1772, in response to the circular letter from the Boston Committee of Correspondence containing a statement of the rights and grievances of the province, nine of the leading citizens of the town were chosen a Petersham Committee of Correspondence to deal with these matters and to prepare resolutions for the town and instructions for its representatives. This committee, answering the letter, congratulates the Boston committee on the virtue of Boston which led them to take the initiative in so good a cause, in the face of its exposure to the first efforts of the "iron jaws of power," and continues as follows:

The time may come when, if you continue your integrity, you may be driven from your goodly heritages and, if that should be the case (which God, of his infinite mercy prevent), we invite you to share with us in our small supplies of the necessities of life, and, should the voracious jaws of tyranny still haunt us and we should not be able to withstand them, we are determined to retire and seek refuge among the inland aboriginal natives of the country, with whom we doubt not but to find more humanity and brotherly love than we have lately received from our mother country. We send herewith an attested copy of the doings of our town. If the nature of causes ever again bespeaks any more from us, we then again shall offer what then may appear right, for we read that those that were faithful spake often one to another and may God of his infinite mercy in his own time deliver us.

The records of the town invite a full reading as the declaration of the "semi-republic" of Petersham, three years before the famous Declaration of 1776; but they can be quoted only in part.

On Jan. 4, 1773, five days after the meeting of December 30 referred to, the committee reported as follows:

The town having received a circular letter from the town of Boston respecting the present grievances and abominable oppression under which this country groans, have therefore taken into their most serious consideration the present policy of the British government and administration with regard to Great Britain and their colonies, have carefully reviewed the mode of election and the quality of the electors of the commons of that island, and have also attentively reflected upon the enormous and growing influence of the crown and that bane of all free states — a standing army in the time of peace — and, in consequence thereof, are fully confirmed in the opinion that the ancient rights of the nation are capitally invaded and the greatest part of the most precious liberties of Englishmen utterly destroyed — and, whereas the parliament of Great Britain by various statutes and acts have unrighteously distressed our trade, denied and precluded us from the setting up and carrying on of manufactures highly beneficial to the inhabitants of these territories, restricted and prevented our lawful intercourse and commerce with other states and kingdoms, and have also made laws and institutions touching life and limb in disherison of the ancient common law of the land, and, moreover, have, in these latter times, robbed and plundered the honest and laborious inhabitants of this extensive continent of their prosperity *by mere force and power*, and are now draining this people of the fruits of their toil by thus raising a revenue from them against the natural rights of man and in open violation of the laws of God: This town, in union with the worthy inhabitants of the town of Boston, now think of their indispensable duty to consider of the premises and the present aspect of the times and to take such steps as, upon mature deliberation, are judged right and expedient, and hereupon the town *Resolved*, that, with a governor appointed from Great Britain during pleasure, with a large stipend dependent upon the will of the Crown and controlled by instructions from a British Minister of State, with a council subject to the negative of such a governor, and with all officers, civil and military, sub-

ject to his appointment or consent, with a castle in the hands of a standing army, stationed in the very bowels of the land, and with that amazing number of place-men and dependents with which every maritime town already swarms, no people can ever be truly virtuous, free or brave:—

Resolved, that the parliament of Great Britain, usurping and exercising legislative authority over and extorting an unrighteous revenue from these colonies against all divine and human law and the late appointment of salaries to be paid to our superior court judges, whose creation, pay and commission depend upon mere will and pleasure, completes a system of bondage equal to any ever before fabricated by the combined efforts of ingenuity, malice, fraud, and wickedness of man.

If we have an eye to our posterity, not only in this world but in the world to come, it is our duty to oppose such a government and . . . this people, for the obtainment of a speedy redress of these mighty grievances and intolerable wrongs, are warranted by the laws of God and Nature in the use of every rightful art and energy of policy, strategem, and force, and they appeal to the throne of the great God for that spirit of valor and irresistible courage which shall occasion our aged and our youth to jeopard their lives with joy in the high places of the field for the preservation of this goodly heritage of our fathers, for the sake of the living children of our loins and the unborn millions of our posterity.

These resolutions, with instructions of like tenor to the representative in the Legislature, received the unanimous vote of the town and were widely quoted in this country and abroad, where they were printed in full in a “History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America,” published in London in 1788.

Do they not stir our blood to-day, after the interval of more than a hundred years, and may we not wonder how this declaration of the little Petersham in Massachusetts at first sounded in the ears of that other ham of St. Peter in the suburbs of London?

The spirit of these resolutions prevailed in all after-action of the town, in spite of the heated opposition of a considerable

number, embracing some of the most respectable and influential persons among its inhabitants, who, loyal to their established government, covenanted that they would recognize no congresses, committees of correspondence, or other unconstitutional assemblages of men, and pledged themselves to resist the forcible exercise of all such authority, repelling force with force, in case of the invasion of their rights of person or property.

These royalists or tories were publicly censured, and the town ordered printed, posted at all the taverns, and broadly circulated, three hundred hand-bills, calling them "incorrigible enemies of freedom and of their country," and forbade all commerce with them, as "traitorous parasites who were willing to enslave their bretheren and posterity forever."

These amenities obtained, in 1767, the following rhymed expression in the Massachusetts *Spy*:

"With minds eclipsed and eke depraved,
As meek as any lamb,
The wretches who would be enslaved
That live in Petersham,
For you, ye worthless Tory band,
Who would not lawless power withstand,
The scorn and scandal of the land,
Be endless plagues and fetters!
Ye want abilities and brains,
Though headstrong as a ram,
And seem to mourn the want of chains,
Ye tools of Petersham!
For slaves like you the rod of power
Is pickling for some future hour;
The taste will prove austere and sour
E'en to the wretch that flatters."

Such interchange of courtesies between old friends and neighbors did not end without violence, involving at one time a barricaded house, surrounded with shotted guns and men behind them, and at least two women in tearful sympha-

thy over a pair of husbands—one within and the other without the barricade—among the besiegers and the besieged; but, fortunately, no very serious trouble followed.

A large majority of the people remained loyal to the cause of liberty and active in preparation for the impending struggle. Town-meetings were frequent, enlistments early, appropriations liberal, and, at length, on April 12, 1775, a week before the Battle of Lexington, the town voted that "every male inhabitant, from 16 years old and upward, be warned to meet at the meeting-house in Petersham with arms and ammunition," on the Monday following. Two days after this meeting, on that nineteenth of April that resounded with "the shot heard round the world," its soldiers were on the march for the defence of Boston. They were at Bunker Hill, at Bennington, at Saratoga, at the surrender of Burgoyne, and, throughout the war, wherever their country called them.

On that famous July 4, 1776, while the men who signed the Declaration of Independence were in session in Philadelphia, the inhabitants of Petersham were assembled in their meeting-house, in active preparation for their part in the work which that Declaration involved and which only intelligent, earnest, and unfaltering patriotism could have achieved; and, everywhere and at all times, in the army, in the general court, in provincial congresses, and in the Congress of the United States, able and energetic representation of Petersham was to be found eagerly rendering any service reasonably required of it.

Following the war were consequences and conditions which, not long after its close, led to the insurrection in Massachusetts, known as Shays's Rebellion. Adequate consideration of this would require more than the time accorded us to-day, but, as that rebellion practically ended in this town, it is a matter demanding brief notice here.

It grew out of the results of the revolutionary struggle. A long and impoverishing war had produced grave public and private embarrassment not unlike that which accompanied the exhaustion of the Southern States at the end of our Civil

War. People sought relief in trade. Goods were heavily imported, luxury appeared, specie disappeared, bankruptcy, distress, and litigation followed. The general government was under burdensome obligations resulting from the war. The State had incurred heavy indebtedness in carrying it on; the towns, in furnishing men; and individuals, in meeting the demands upon themselves.

During the war private interests were in a measure subordinated to public considerations. When war ended and the courts resumed peaceful sessions all these obligations arose, swollen with accumulated interest, and demanded settlement. Nobody could wait, and nobody could pay. Congress pressed the States for their proportion of the national debt; the States became strenuous and individuals importunate. This was especially true of Massachusetts, which had furnished one third of the effective force in the national service. Her debt to the general government, to the officers and soldiers she had sent to the war, and her other obligations amounted to \$10,000,000. The only sources of revenue were from diminished and diminishing importations and from estates and polls overwhelmed with embarrassment and less than 100,000 in number. Heavy taxes were assessed upon an impoverished, distressed, and disheartened people. These taxes and the thousands of cases pending for collection of debts—a single attorney sometimes bringing a hundred suits in a single court—produced intense bitterness of feeling. Lawyers, in the simple discharge of professional duty, became objects of deep resentment, which extended to courts and judges and, finally, developed into armed combination to prevent the peaceful administration of justice. Against this the militia, themselves largely insurgents or disaffected, were of no avail. Matters reached such threatening proportions that rebellion was declared and an army of between four thousand and five thousand men was raised to suppress it.

This army, in which was the company of Captain Park Holland, of Petersham, was under command of General

Lincoln, who had been an able officer in the War of the Revolution. He marched first to Worcester and enabled the courts there to hold their sessions. Thence he proceeded to Springfield, where the insurgents, under Captain Shays, were concentrated with the intention of capturing the arsenal, which was guarded by General Shepherd.

Having in vain exhausted all peaceful appeals to Shays, Shepherd finally opened fire upon the rebels and forced them to retreat to the neighboring towns. After the arrival of Lincoln and some days of ineffectual parleying, Shays again retreated—this time to Petersham, where it is supposed he expected to find recruits and, if necessary, make a stand.

Lincoln immediately followed with infantry, cavalry, and artillery, as hotly as may be predicated of an all-night pursuit, in the bitter cold of winter, in the face of a pitiless snow-storm, without food, rest, or shelter, on an uninterrupted march of thirty miles, which has been likened, in hardship, exposure, and suffering, to the retreat of the French from Moscow.

Fortunately, no one actually perished, and, early Sunday morning, Feb. 4, 1787 (Col. Ephraim Stearns, ancestor of Mrs. Jas. Stowell, leading the government troops), Lincoln's army was on our hill, to the utter amazement of Shays, one hundred and fifty of whose men were taken prisoners. The rest, leaving in some cases their hot coffee, hats, and muskets, hastily retreated towards Athol, taking the road which passed the house now occupied by Miss Letitia Davenport, and the back of the rebellion was broken. Such of Shays's men as did not lay down their arms and return to their homes scattered in different directions but made no serious further disturbance. Leaders were indicted, convicted of treason, and sentenced to be hanged; and glorious old Sam Adams, who had no sympathy or patience with armed opposition to the laws of a republic, would have sent them all to the gibbet. But another feeling prevailed. Great consideration was felt for men many of whom, having borne arms for their country in redress of grievances suffered under British rule, were

misled into the belief that the then existing hardships were grievances of the same character, to be redressed in the same way.

Two commissioners were appointed, one of them General Lincoln, with authority to pardon except in a few cases. Amnesty became general and finally universal, including even Shays, of whom ran the old rhyme:

“My name is Shays; in former days,
In Pelham I did dwell, sir,
But now I ’m forced to leave that place
Because I did rebel, sir.”

For the half-century following little occurred to affect the quiet and prosperity of the town which, on July 4, fifty years ago, celebrated the centennial anniversary of its incorporation, when the late Rev. Edmund B. Willson, of Salem, a native of Petersham, delivered here an able and interesting address which contains the fullest existing town history, from which I have freely borrowed for the present occasion.

That period, as already intimated, marks the beginning of the decline in population and material prosperity which has gradually brought us to existing conditions. Shortly before that date, and until a destructive fire, in 1847, swept nearly every building from the west side of the Common, there were here a large factory for the manufacture of lasting buttons, several places for pressing and boxing for market palm-leaf hats, which were then braided here in considerable quantities by the women and children of the town. There were shoe-shops, tailors’ shops, a harness-shop, a jewelers’ shop, two stores, two doctors, two lawyers,—one of them trying as many cases as any other in Worcester County,—three carriage-builders, a half-dozen blacksmiths, large and profitable farms, three comparatively well-filled churches, two hotels, and two six-horse daily mail-coaches going respectively to and from Worcester, Greenfield, and Brattleboro. Those then engaged in the various callings referred to were the men who celebrated the anniversary of a half-cen-

tury ago. They are gone, and their very names, with few exceptions, are well-nigh forgotten by all but a few of us gray-heads who then were boys and girls.

At that time colored men, women, and children were bought and sold like cattle, by public auction, in the capital of this great republic, by citizens proud of their Constitution, ordained and established to secure the blessings of liberty to themselves and their posterity. The country was again upon the brink of that hell of war that opened, not long after, with the first shot at Sumpter, as did the War of the Revolution, nearly a hundred years before, with that first shot that announced the struggle for liberty.

What this war was, what it cost, what it achieved, and what names it gave to fame throughout the United States—for the soldier and patriot loyal to his highest ideals was found among the vanquished as well as among the victors—you all know. The story is in a thousand volumes, has been rehearsed on many a Memorial Day, and will be so long as its heroes remain to receive the tributes of a grateful people.

What it meant to the anxious and stricken hearts in this town and in Barre, and to their Co. F of the Fifty-third Massachusetts Regiment (only this surviving remnant of which is with you to-day), is best told in the generous tribute to Captain Mudge and his shattered company delivered here, five years ago, by Mr. Simes, in his admirable memorial address, which had very much to say for the head and heart of both its author and his subject.

When John Green Mudge came to Petersham, in 1849, there came a brave, gentle, upright, unselfish, many-sided, and widely gifted man, who learned to love the town as have very few of its natives, and who, for forty years, served it in every relationship as did no other man. When he died, as Mr. Simes well said, something seemed taken out of Petersham that never could be replaced. The one labor of his life in which he took the most pride was his own and that of his company by the waters of the Mississippi, and the thing that most stirred the enthusiasm of his last days was the erection,

at his instigation, in memory of the patriotic men who had served their town and country, of a public library which should afford to coming generations such knowledge of worthy achievement and such inspiration to worthy action as were not easily accessible to the youth of his earlier days.

He lived to see completed the building which contains our library of nine thousand volumes founded by the late Francis Augustus Brooks, a native of Petersham, and grand-nephew of Eleazer Bradshaw, before referred to as the giver of the old Paul Revere bell. All of Captain Mudge's friends, — and all who rightly knew him were his friends — hoped he would live many years to see the usefulness of the Memorial Building and its well-selected and rapidly multiplying volumes, but, unhappily, its dedication was the good man's funeral.

Shakespeare said,

“The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interrèd with their bones.”

It sometimes happens that the good men do lives after them. Among the many grateful friends whom Captain Mudge left here was Miss Lucy Flora Willis, an unfortunate woman who was for many years a great sufferer. Rheumatism had destroyed her eyesight, drawn her bones from their sockets, deprived her of all use of her limbs, and left her a bedridden, helpless, hopeless invalid, in total darkness and almost utter despair. Her suffering established the only needed claim to the benevolent man's sympathy and kindness, and the poor woman found in him such unfailing cheer, encouragement, consolation, and comfort that when, after he had gone, she directed the preparation of her will, she said, “What I have I shall give to the Memorial Library, which meant so much to Captain Mudge; for he was always most kind to me, and I think, if he were living, I could thus give him more pleasure than by any other use I could make of my property.”

Before leaving the subject of our library, which forms the prominent public feature in the late development of the town,

we must very gratefully mention the name of Mr. Francis H. Lee, of Salem. He is with us, and much of what would otherwise be said must be omitted. But we owe it to ourselves to say that to him, more than to any one else, we owe our library and its constant growth, as well as much else of great value to us. His generosity is sleepless and untiring. With him a good deed done means always another somewhere begun; and when—as we hope long hence—his active kindness to us shall cease, those who survive him here again will say something has gone out of Petersham which cannot be replaced.

There is a piece of railway in Germany on which it is said the modern engine has been driven at the rate of one hundred and fifty miles an hour,—a speed at which the passenger, looking at everything by the roadside, sees nothing, because all is blended in inextricable confusion.

I fear only such confusion will attend my effort to give you one hundred and fifty years of Petersham in sixty minutes—or thereabouts—for I perceive our old engine is not quite making schedule time.

There has been opportunity merely to glance at our periods of barren wilderness, of fruitful cultivation, of struggle and disaster, and of growth and decline from that dark time of the wigwam to this bright day of the summer cottage, from the isolation and deprivation of the beginning to this hour of rural delivery and the electric wire that bring to the door of the outlying farmhouse and to the ear of the farmer the written and spoken word of the whole planet, and enable the touch of a button in Washington to instantly start the massive machinery on the opposite side of the continent.

Who have been the actors here in these years that, throughout the world, have produced greater changes than were wrought in all the preceding years of the Christian era? There is hardly time to read a catalogue of their names, some of which might well have taken all our time to-day. There was Colonel Grout, a leader in all town affairs, a soldier in the French wars, a member of the Committee of Correspondence,

a representative in both branches of our Legislature, in our provincial congresses, and in the first Congress of the United States; Colonel Doolittle, also a member of that committee, whose regiment was on the march to Cambridge on the day of the battle of Lexington and was at the battle of Bunker Hill; the Chandlers, members of the foremost family in Worcester County, graduates of Harvard College, pupils of John Adams, leaders among our earliest merchants and business men, ancestors of Mrs. Dr. Ware, of Lancaster, of the late Mrs. Prof. Theophilus Parsons, of Cambridge, both natives of Petersham, and of Professor Chandler of the Institute of Technology, Boston.

There were the Willards, members of a noted family, different branches of which furnished two presidents for Harvard College, a pastor for the Old South Church in Boston, the architect of Bunker Hill Monument,— the still living Joseph Willard, for more than fifty years clerk of the courts of Suffolk County;— the once widely known Samuel Willard, the blind preacher of Deerfield, and our own honored Deacon Cephas Willard, a strong, brave man, for more than a half-century officer of church, town, county, and state; trusted and trustworthy always and everywhere; declining service only once, and that when directed, as sheriff, to execute a criminal, his answer being, “I can resign, but I cannot perform that act;” a man who could say, as he held the hand of his dying wife: “We have lived together fifty-eight years and I do not know that either ever spoke a word that gave the other pain.” He died at 92, and when asked, near the end of life, the secret of his health and strength, said, “I always walked on the sunny side of the road when the choice was mine.”

There were the Sandersons, strong, patriotic, and widely useful men, of integrity and influence; the Hollands, soldiers, engineers, inventors, one of their descendants, the late Dr. J. G. Holland, author and editor of *Scribner's* and *The Century* magazines; the Hammonds, capable and trusted men in many responsible places, one a graduate of Dart-

mouth, who became president of South Carolina College, and his son Governor of the State and one of its United States Senators; the Neguses, prominent among our townspeople, a single family of whose gifted girls became: one, the wife of Richard Hildreth, the historian; another, the mother of Fuller, the artist; another, the mother of the late Thomas and Benjamin Howe (the latter of whom wrote of Petersham men and things many sketches that are among our most valuable records); another, the mother of Corporal Benjamin W. Spooner, irreverently known as "Ben," our marshal to-day, and the only man in town whose homestead, built by an ancestor, has sheltered six lineal generations; and these were not all of those Negus girls.

Mary Ann Howe, who wrote the hymn sung at our former celebration. How familiar to some of us her big shears and goose and pressing-board and big steel thimble, that, for many years, went with her, from farm to farm, to cut and stitch and press the clothing of the farmer and his boys, at fifty cents a day! How her keen wits gauged his character and habits as her tape took measurements of his tabernacle of flesh!—an industrious and helpful being, the product of whose honest and ill-paid toil was many a generous deed in life and a handsome sum bequeathed at death. How rough her left forefinger, where the needle pricked it! And what conscience went into the jerk of her linen thread as she drew our buttons home to stay!—an altogether excellent woman, although it must be confessed she wrought such similarity of expression into the fore and aft of our trousers as to remind us of the breeches of the little chap whose mother said that, when too far away to see his face, she could never tell whether he was going to school or coming home.

There were also the Bigelows, Daniel and Lewis, eminent lawyers, the latter of whom wrote the first digest of the reports of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts and was at one time a member of Congress; the Mileses, father and grandfather of Lieutenant-General Miles of the United States Army; the Howes, Sylvanus, chairman of our famous Committee of

Correspondence, owner of the largest and most productive farm in town, now the property of Franklin Haven, of Boston, and his brother, Captain Asa, of whom is told the story that, late in life, one day in haying, on the approach of a shower, he undertook alone to place all the hay two men could pitch upon his cart, and finding the task too much for him, slid down onto the back of one of his oxen and thence to the ground, and when asked why he came down, said, "For more hay;" the Bryants, for many years and still in responsible official service of the town; Doctor Parkhurst, our president here a half-century ago, an able physician and prominent citizen of dignified and courtly bearing. How well some of us remember his hospitable home and his attractive family, his old gig and saddle-bags and the smell and taste of his pills and powders!

There were dear Old Sampson Wetherell, our worthy citizen and kindly neighbor and friend, who was so long store-keeper and postmaster that he seemed a sort of perennial Santa Claus, creating and dispensing the blessings of his candy-counter and the mails; Isaac Ayers, the smell and taste of whose big sweet apples was one of our autumnal anticipations; the Towers, farmers, teachers, a preacher, a merchant, a banker, councillor and member of the Governor's Staff; the Willsons, ever active and generous benefactors of the town; the Lincolns, the Spooners, the Hildreths, the Weeds, the Rosses, the Stones, the Fosters, the Hapgoods, the Whites, the Wilders, the Houghtons, the Williamses, the Wadsworths, the McCartys, the Clarks, the Reeds, the Goddards, the Bosworths, the Peckhams, the Cooks,—yes, even the Brooks, if you were not already inundated by their overflow.

To most of you these are but empty names. I call them for the few of us for whom they repeople farmhouse, town house, meeting-house, and schoolhouse, reopen hospitable doors, rekindle the warmth and glow of old hearthstones, and restore, for the moment, the light of departed days, and

of the eyes that made them memorable. Hail to them all, and farewell!

I shall pronounce but two more names,—those of John Fiske and his son Ralph, both at rest in the old churchyard yonder.

If Dr. Fiske had lived until now, we should have had the privilege of listening to him here to-day. This was not to be. Gifted as not many men have been, rich in knowledge that could not be transmitted, master of an art that he could not bequeath, at the zenith of his great power, anticipating the performance of the best work of his life, and on the eve of crossing the Atlantic to address the English people, at their request, on the one-thousandth anniversary of the death of King Alfred, he crossed his threshold for a breath of sea air and, in a few hours, on July 4, 1901, had crossed the threshold of death.

I refer to him not because of the great man he was, or of the monumental work he did, but for his association with our little town.

From the day of his first coming here, between forty and fifty years ago, to the end of his life he loved these hills as he loved no other spot on earth. From whatever beautiful place, on either side of the Atlantic, his letters afterwards came, it was always to say that this remained to him the most beautiful of all. He called it his native place, explaining that here he was born again. He said that if his work had not required him to be near the great libraries of Cambridge and Boston, he should have here spent the greater part of his time. Of death he used to say it had no terrors, for it simply meant going to Petersham to stay.

Of all his works, none have been more widely read and translated than his four little volumes upon religious subjects, grateful appreciation of which came to him from many sources and all denominations, even ministers saying they had been to them the salvation of their faith.

Two of these, "The Destiny of Man" and "The Idea of God," were written and dedicated, respectively, to his wife

and children, in the old Brooks homestead in Petersham, and the latter was first read to a group of friends under the shade of its old maples.

These little volumes merit a word beyond the mere mention of their place of birth, for they deal with things of local, because of universal, interest. "The Idea of God" and "The Destiny of Man" awaken the first questionings of childhood and affect the tranquillity of age. They are part of the history of Petersham because they are the germ of all history and of all biography, inspiring the aspirations of the saint and the forebodings of the sinner. They have slowly evolved the all-embracing conception of the one fatherhood of God and the one brotherhood of man. They determine for the ploughman in his furrow, for the smith at his forge, for the statesman in the halls of legislation, and for the judge upon the bench, as well as for the minister at the altar, what he is and what he does, and shape for him his ideal of what all men ought to be and do.

For any help these two little volumes of Mr. Fiske have afforded the living and may afford the yet unborn, we of Petersham may be glad to remember that here they were written and that here their writer rests.

His love of our town has descended to his children and his children's children. What it was to his son Ralph is happily said in lines on Petersham found among his manuscripts after his too early death, and published later in the *Atlantic Monthly* for September, 1899—lines which, I am sure, will touch in some heart-strings here such sympathetic chord as will justify my closing by reading them:

PETERSHAM.

Here, where the peace of the Creator lies,
Far from the busy mart's incessant hum,
Where mountains in their lonely grandeur rise,
Waiting unmoved the ages yet to come,
Thou dwellest under broad and tranquil skies,
A green oasis with unfailing springs,
The undisturbèd home of restful things.

Here, with the morn, when day is blithely breaking,
And from the East a hemisphere of light
Rolls westward o'er a world refreshed, awaking
From the embrace of slumber and of night,
Sweet comes the bonny bluebird's joyous greeting,
While strutting Chanticleer, with tuneful throat,
Heralds the day in shrill, exultant note.

At sunset through thy woods I take my way,
Threading the mazy walks and avenues,
While from the crimson west some lingering ray
Falls on my path, and Memory's shrine endues
With dreamy incense of a bygone day,
And in the thronging multitude of sylvan voices
Sweet summer music tells us how the wood rejoices.

Ah! can this be the Paradise? or yet
Bright El Dorado, or Arcadia, where
Glad fairies revel when the sun hath set,
And songs of birds forever fill the air?
Where nymph or dryad, with soft eyes of jet,
Lures the late wanderer to his final rest,
And charms his life out on her faithless breast?

O thou most dear and venerated spot,
I love thee for that thou art still as when
In happy hours — unclouded then my lot —
I lay within thy fern-enshrouded glen
And felt thy loving presence. Not again
With prayers or tears may vanished hours be bought.
So be it, then, and here on thy green breast,
When life is done, grant me a spot to rest.

POEM BY FRANCIS Z. STONE:

THE lips are dumb that should have sung to-day,
And where he lies the lights and shadows play,
Wreathing about the stone which bears his verse
The golden semblance of a crown of bay.

His tribute to the soil perchance is heard
In whispering wind, or pipe of wandering bird,—
What measured syllables can I rehearse
As eloquent as his unspoken word?

We are not here, I think, to celebrate
The landscape that we love, but the estate
They left in trust to us who founded it
As on a rock to stand inviolate.

The past is dead? Not so — the poet sings
Of buried error; our achievement springs
From those dim forms that in our background flit,
Men intimate with elemental things.

Obscure they lie, commingled with the soil;
But this, at least, we know: they rest from toil,
And on these generations they bestow
Of their stern conquest all the battle-spoil.

They halted Time apace upon his track
To load with what they had his haversack,—
Ah! far above what cursing soldiers throw
From shattered windows at a city's sack,

When women shriek, and ruined roof-trees blaze,
And Slaughter stalks, red-armed, along the ways; —
Theirs the sole salvage of the centuries lost,
The wealth, world-dowering, of earnest days!

Not wealth of finished work, but work begun,
The larger concepts that men's lives outrun,
Pursuing which, all paths at last are crossed
By utter dark dividing sun and sun.

They gave us of their best; the meaner dross
They spent, and left us richer for the loss!
The ripe fruit falls to earth when, over-blown,
Dead leaves before the storm unheeded toss.

The faith that fronted forests, and perceived
Beneath the tangled branches, myriad-leaved,
And crowning barren hill-tops, boulder-strown,
The future's opulent harvest, safely sheaved:

That was, in truth, their faith, and not the grim
Belief in warring fiend and cherubim,
Through which old fears were darkly symbolized
In gloomy sermon and desponding hymn.

That faith be ours. Long as that faith we keep
Nor doubt nor vain regret shall vex their sleep,
And be that heritage more dearly prized
Than all the gems that star the nether deep!

They did their work, and neither more nor less
The best may do along their track who press
To that low inn wherein alike we lapse
From fame, or infame, to forgetfulness.

Why fret and fritter o'er ephemeral things?
Endeavor such as theirs at evening brings
No lengthening shadow of a black Perhaps,—
Secure they sought their rest as guarded kings.

Their lives were narrow? Well, it may be so —
Not where the waters spread in overflow,
But where, constrained to deeper ways they run,
Is gathered power to turn the wheels below.

With rugged sense they met each exigence
Of changing times, and proved their competence

Alike behind the ploughshare and the gun
To plant the land, and stand the land's defence.

Schooled in the statecraft of a town's affairs,
A civic conscience unobscured was theirs,

Knowing no middle ground 'twixt right and wrong,
Their ballots not less earnest than their prayers.

Clear-eyed through all the fog of party strife,
Undeafened by the clamorous voices rife

With menace and petition, they made strong
Their arms to combat for the nation's life.

They looked beyond the moment, and they saw
Across red, trampled fields of blazing war,

Peace rise with brow serene to bless the land
Beneath the sway of Industry and Law.

Not that they fought; — no people sinks so low
But on occasion they may strike a blow

And fall, if need be, broken sword in hand,
In the forefront of the embattled foe.

Not that they fought, the miracle, but why!
These were no men whose passions, burning high,

Burst rocket-like in flame, nor were impelled
By martial pride to don War's panoply.

Inherent in the old Teutonic stock
Is valor stubborn-grained as native rock,—

Their own the prescience which afar beheld
A birth whose throes were merged in battle shock!

When vaunted statesmanship was shown inept,
When captains on their posts inglorious slept,

Here, where a rugged soil reared rugged men,
The covenant of 'seventy-six was kept.

Long as their sepulchre remains a shrine,
What need have we, or they, to seek a sign?

But when we turn away, apostate, then
Give back their outworn seed-fields to the pine.

To-day the need is ours, with reverent tread
To pilgrim thither with uncovered head,
And heeding portents of impending change,
Hold counsel with the spirit of the dead.

Ah, friends, these innovations which we boast
Were old when the Red Sea drowned Pharaoh's host,
And tricked in garments modernized and strange
Our progress is arrested by a ghost!

Not ours, but theirs, initiative to build
On larger lines, albeit with hands less skilled,
The state of which men dreamed in ancient Greece
Wherein man's destiny should be fulfilled.

They wrought our heritage from steel and oak,
Seeing its shape through storm and battle-smoke,—
With sword and axe and trowel, in war and peace,
This edifice was reared, stern stroke on stroke.

Not census-sheets or tax-rolls make a state,
Helvetia is not less poor than great.

The spirit and purpose of the citizen,—
These are the nation's arbiters of fate!

Not armies, nor leviathans that ride
Caparisoned in steel upon the tide,
Nor tribute wrung from injured, sullen men,
Are pledges that our strength will still abide; —

When Wealth defiles the sanctity of law,
When demagogues incite to civil war,
When legislation grows an auction mart,
And thirty pieces make the senator!

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
Whence cometh help." The psalmist's harp-string thrills,
The clouds of doubt diminish and depart,
And golden sunshine all the landscape fills.

Back to your tents, O Israel! What avail
Egyptian flesh-pots, and the weary tale

Of strawless brick,— the inutilities
Which have no weight in God's eternal scale?

This is your birthright still; no claimant bars
Your full possession, or your title mars;

Turn from the multitude's futilities
That transient are as gnats beneath the stars!

A little while, and what will matter then
The gross activities of froward men,
Who pyramid their perishable spoil
And are, at once, as they had never been?

Here, on the hills, are permanence and peace,
And neighborhood, and sanctified increase,—
Immutabilities of sun and soil
For world-worn seekers of the golden fleece.

Here, on the heights, an incense fresh ascends
From nature's altar, where the sweet-fern bends;
Clean winds sweep large horizons, and the blue
With the world's outer rampart softly blends;

This watch-tower of the faith, set on a hill,
Has yet, perchance, a purpose to fulfil —

As when, of old, men looked to it, and knew
New England kept the nation's conscience still.

ADDRESS BY MR. ABIATHAR BLANCHARD, A NATIVE
OF PETERSHAM:

YOU will permit me to express my pleasure in being present on this occasion, commemorative of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of my native town. I am glad to be here, and, in saying so, I surely voice the feeling of the inhabitants of Petersham, as well as of others who, either once identified with the town or tracing their ancestry here, have returned to join in this celebration.

We have always heard a good deal about patriotism. Sometimes we may have heard too much, especially when that quality has been exalted above the moral law, though I would be the last to decry a cardinal civic virtue. But there is a sentiment, of the very essence of patriotism, of which there is little danger that we shall have too much. Rather is the tendency in these days the other way. The object of this sentiment is not the nation, or the state, but the town in which we live. Here is our home, with its family ties. Here are our neighbors and immediate circle of friends. Here are the local institutions, municipal, educational, and religious, that come close to our every-day and even our inmost life. Thus one town takes precedence of all others. It appeals directly and continually to our public spirit. Its well-being we cherish. To its honor and reputation we are almost as sensitive as to our own. The law allows to each citizen one domicile, but there are many of us who owe a sort of divided allegiance. There is the town of our nativity and the town of our adoption. There is the home where we were born and nurtured and the home that we established for ourselves in later life. However much the latter may command our duty and engross

our thought, there is that in the former which will never suffer it to be forgotten. Of the strength of that primal allegiance the gathering to-day is a witness.

Old Petersham, enthroned on her picturesque hills in the heart of our beloved Commonwealth of Massachusetts! "Here where the peace of the Creator lies"! Beautiful in her natural aspect, with a "charm of landscape and of sky" of which even the stranger owns the spell! What, then, does it mean to us who first opened our eyes upon these scenes, passing here the impressionable years of childhood and growing up to manhood and womanhood? What fairer setting could we wish for the annals and traditions of our ancestors? It was a profound truth uttered by the old classic, *Humani nihil alienum* (nothing is foreign to me). It is humanity that interests us, and it is the human element that to us invests these familiar scenes with an especial attraction and significance.

The real Petersham is to be found in people we have known here, those whom we are glad to greet on this occasion, others absent in body but present in spirit, and the "cloud of witnesses" whom memory summons from the past. They are the ones who have consecrated this soil and made it the lode-stone that brings to it to-day our willing feet.

I have made an allusion to patriotism. It was here fifty years ago that I received my first impression of the American flag. In anticipation of the one-hundredth anniversary of the incorporation of the town, a "liberty-pole" had been erected on Petersham Common. On this the banner of the republic was raised and its streaming folds flung to the free air of heaven. An impressive sight under any conditions! To my child's vision that flag was "like a meteor in the sky," and the impression made by that first flag-raising stands out unique from all others, vivid and undimmed by the years.

But we have made history since that natal day. Seven years later there was another display of the flag on Petersham streets—not one flag, but many. I recall a Sabbath morning in May, 1861. Before each house and strung across

the street were flags in every variety. The spectacle meant something, for in those early days of the War of the Rebellion the inquiry went around whether this man, that, or the other was loyal to the Union. To this inquiry the display of the flag was deemed a sufficient answer, and such it proved in the event. Through the four years of that terrible war Petersham, in common with her sister towns, stood staunch and loyal, and we to-day are proud of her record. Of what that conflict meant to this town the Memorial Building that fronts the village green will tell something to coming generations. The same service will be performed by memorial addresses and records of various kinds, but the personal note evoked at the time by the events themselves can never be entirely reproduced. The way to learn history is to live when it is being made. That is the task the real historian sets for himself. Those of us who were old enough to "take in" the events of the Civil War learned its history to some purpose. In that momentous era we could say, with deep feeling of its truth,

"We are living, we are living
In a grand and awful time,
In an age on ages telling;
To be living is sublime."

Lowell says in one of his addresses, "It was a benediction to have lived in the same age with Abraham Lincoln." So much may be said, and more. It was also a benediction and an inspiration to have known personally so many of the men who, sacrificing their business interests and personal comfort, and severing the dearest ties, risked their lives for their country. In a small town like Petersham it was not possible to raise whole companies, and so these men, enlisting at different times, were to be found in different commands and in all branches of the service. All honor to them, wherever they were! Their names recur to me as I speak, as they will to many in this audience. They can never be forgotten. It is with no invidious distinction, then, that I mention partic-

ularly the company of men who went from this town and Barre, enlisting in the summer of 1862. This was the darkest period of the war. McClellan had been baffled before Richmond, our armies had suffered defeat in the battles before the national capitol, and the rebels later crossed the Potomac into Maryland. It was at this stage of the war that Company F of the Fifty-third Regiment was recruited. It was no holiday pastime for which these men enlisted, but the grim business of war. As I look upon the little band of survivors to-day I think of Webster's apostrophe to the surviving soldiers of the Revolution, for I see before me men equally worthy of honor. There is a pleasure mingled with sadness as I look into your faces. Other faces as familiar as yours come before me, the beloved comrades who marched and battled and some of whom fell by your side, and in the van your gallant commander, that irreproachable gentleman, our Bayard, that prince among men, Captain Mudge.

But what of the future? However "secure the past" may be, time does not stop in his course. There is a future of some kind for our ancestral town. A contrary supposition would throw a pall over the present exercises. What shall that future bring?

There are some things we would fain hope for in the Petersham that is to be. One is that she may take up into her municipal, social, and religious life much of the spirit of the past; that some scions of the old stock may continue to live here and influence her destinies. That great changes are going on in the lineage of the people who live here is not to be doubted. We are also painfully aware that in recent years there have been many signs of a decaying prosperity. From a certain point of vantage the other day I marked eight abandoned farms. Those hearthstones have grown cold, and the houses that in my easy recollection were centres of life are either falling to ruin or have entirely disappeared. I look for a turn in the tide, to a time when it will be profitable to farm here in the hill towns of New England, when these abandoned acres will be reclaimed and new and better houses

rise in the place of the old. Economic changes are taking place in that direction, and people of a different ancestry from ours are finding it out. These people have in them the making of good citizens, and everything should be done to make them good citizens.

The spirit of old Petersham, the spirit of this occasion, should be projected into the future. What is the mission of your public library, with its treasures of literature and other means of ministration to the higher life of the community? What is the mission of the three churches that have stood here for so long? May they still continue to "point their spires of faith to heaven;" for there is work enough for them and similar organizations to do, a work that cannot be left unperformed without peril to the town and to the State. Again, there is the school. Had I the time I would stop to eulogize the traditional and actual little red schoolhouse of my recollection, and the many superior teachers who have held sway in those humble institutions. How much we owe to them! But in my vision of the future, and in accord with the spirit of the age, I see not many little schoolhouses scattered over the landscape, but a large, thoroughly appointed central building with a trained corps of instructors putting into practice the most approved ideas in education. But the work should not stop with the ordinary English branches. There should be the fullest opportunity for high-school studies that fit for life, and also, for those who desire it, a preparation for the great colleges and universities of the country. I am sure that there are many here who can remember the larger vision and opportunity that came to them when Principles Sprague, Dudley, Peabody, and Leonard, with able assistants, conducted in successive years the Petersham Classical High School; others will recall with similar feelings an institution of larger scope, the Highland Institute, with its corps of accomplished teachers, which flourished here for several years. Let the young people, our successors here, have better advantages still; for the world moves on. It is for their good and the good of the town. The declared pol-

icy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is to give every child within its borders a chance for an education, including the higher education. This policy of the State should be met by the towns much more than half way, for upon its universal prevalence depend not only the highest welfare of the towns themselves, but also the stability of the commonwealth and the great republic.

Our friendly forecast, then, for the ancestral town whose anniversary we commemorate to-day would place her well within the scope and tendency of the highest civilization, within easy reach of the best things of life, to which, in the future as in the past, she should make no unworthy contribution.

POEM BY REV. MR. TOWER, ALSO A NATIVE OF
THE TOWN:

“**W**HAT 'S hallowed ground?” the poet asks,
And answers as he may,
In words of glowing eloquence,
As is the poet's way.
But Nature speaks in louder tones,
Prosaic though they be,
And cries, “The spot where life was young
Is hallowed ground to me.”
And so from distant haunts of men,
Where'er their dwellings be,
Thy sons and daughters, Petersham,
With fond hearts turn to thee.
They view thee with enchanted eye;
To their anointed gaze
A light falls on thee from a sky
Unseen since childhood days.
To them (although it be not theirs
A reason to assign)
No suns so bright, no fields so green,
No skies so blue, as thine!
No zephyrs soft as those that stir
Thy woods as day declines;

No music like thy tinkling brooks
Or like thy murmuring pines!

What pictures from the vanished years
Through memory's chambers throng!
The swallow twittering from the eaves,
The bluebird's early song!
The squirrel chattering in the elm,
The hawk's shriek from the sky,
The lonely notes of whippoorwill,
The quail's foreboding cry,
The woodbird's weird but tuneful song
Deep in the everglade,
Heard oftenest as the night drew on
With ever deepening shade;
The wondrous sound by day or night
Of wild fowl on the wing,
Unresting in their Northern flight,
The harbingers of spring;
The copse with wild fruits freighted rare
On vine and bush and ground; —
No fairer sight to childhood's eye
Can through the earth be found!

And e'en the man whose travelled eye
Has glanced o'er many lands,
Whose feet have trod the mountain-tops
Or crossed the desert sands,
But stands at length upon these heights
And views the prospect round
From where the central hamlet stands
To yon horizon's bound,
And sees thy meads, thy clustered hills,
Thy vales and woods between,
To where Wachusett lifts his head
Above his pastures green;
To where Monadnock rears his bulk
Up toward the Northern star;
To where New Salem's distant spires
Gleam in the west afar;

To where bold Hoosac towers aloft
Full sixty miles away
And marshals all his vassal peaks
In one sublime array;
Where sun-lit clouds in circling groups
On misty slopes are driven,
And tier on tier the ranges rise
Like giant steps to heaven.
Who views this scene when morning dews
Flash rainbows in the sun,
Or when the western mountains blaze
Before the day is done;
Who views it clothed in summer's sheen,
A glory dazzling sight,
Or wrapt in winter's spotless robe,
A glory scarce less bright;
Can never say, with soul unstained,
That Beauty dwells not here
As surely as on Alpine height
Or Scotia's storied mere!
In Nature's temple he who bends
With reverence sincere
Seeks vainly a more sacred shrine
Than that awaits him here;
For Nature here with lavish hand
Has all her arts combined
To fire the fancy, thrill the soul,
And captivate the mind.

But other scenes from memory's store
Arise upon my view,
Which stir the inmost, deepest thought
As not e'en these can do.
I see no stately mansions rise
To line the lengthening street
Whose costly pavements, night and day,
Are beat by hurrying feet;
I see no mammoth marts of trade;
I hear no engines roar

Amid the din of crowded shops
 Whence streams of wealth outpour;
I see no lordly palaces,
 No tall cathedral spires,
No gay-decked throng on pleasure bent
 With all that heart desires;
As memory's magic hand unrolls
 The scroll of bygone years
A sight of deeper meaning far
 To my tranced eye appears.
I see the source, the primal source,
 Whence all those splendors come;
I see the Nation's final hope,
 I see the COUNTRY HOME.
A Home indeed! Not a mere lodge
 To pass the night away,
While the heart's interest wanders far
 In other scenes to stray;
But Home, the center of the soul,
 An anchor and a stay,
A source of strength that shall not fail
 To life's remotest day.

What though the stern demands of toil
 Fill full the fleeting hours,
And tasks by stubborn nature set
 Tax all the vital powers?
Those powers expand and stronger grow
 "The strenuous life" to try;
No toil so good for brawn and brain
 As neath the open sky.
Swift speeds the blood through healthy veins;
 And with their minds aglow,
The toilers, seeking honest gains,
 In virtue also grow.
And thus the hand that held the plow
 And drew the furrow straight
Prevails to carve a fortune out
 When come to man's estate.

And so thy children, Petersham,
 Have made thy merit known
In circles wide, both near and far,
 As passing years have flown.
With courage high they have gone forth
 In all the walks of life,
And in the world's broad battlefield
 Proved victors in the strife.
The marts of commerce and of trade
 Have claimed full many a son,
And large successes oft have told
 Of service ably done.
In arts mechanic some have thrived,
 With skillful hand and brain;
And some aspiring have not failed
 Th' inventor's meed to gain.
The teacher's high vocation some
 Have plied, and plied it well,
And blessings rich have spread abroad,
 Far more than words can tell.
The bar and public halls of state
 Have fitly claimed a share,
Nor lacked the praise of duty done,
 And reputation fair.
And some by lofty purpose moved
 The sacred desk have filled,
And with the oracles of Heaven
 The listening people thrilled;
Premising it were joy supreme
 To do the works of love
And leave all questions of award
 To be adjudged above.
And some by patriot ardor fired
 To save the nation's life
Exchanged the quiet joys of home
 For scenes of bloody strife.
On distant fields, neath Southern skies,
 Where issues vast were tried,
'Mid rifle-shot and cannon's roar
 They nobly fought and died.

Here halts our verse; nor tongue nor pen
Nor thought can farther go!
What is the object, what the end
Of all things here below?
What save that men upright and true,
Such as were first designed,
Should rise in manhood's glorious strength
And live to bless mankind?
Such have been here; as freshening streams
From fountains in the hill
Flow down till verdure, growth, and bloom
The vales and meadows fill;
So from thy dwellings, Petersham,
These streams of life have flowed
To which, with others like them, all
Our nation boasts is owed.
In all the wealth, prosperity,
And greatness which combine
To raise our land all lands above,
A generous share is thine.
Long be it so! and never may
Thy children love thee less!
And may the Author of all good
Thy hills and valleys bless!



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